

Message Text

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SUBJECT TOP FRENCH SCIENCE PLANNING JOB GOES TO HUBERT CURIEN

FOR SCI

1. IT WAS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THIS WEEK THAT HUBERT CURIEN WILL REPLACE PIERRE AIGRAIN AS DELEGUE GENERAL OF THE DELEGATION GENERALE A LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE ET TECHNIQUE (DGRST). AIGRAIN WILL ACCEPT A UNIVERSITY PROFESSORSHIP AT MIT FOR THE COMING YEAR. UNTIL NOW, CURIEN DIRECTED THE CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE (CNRS), WHICH IS THE GOF'S MAJOR BASIC RESEARCH ORGANIZATION. HE UNDERTAKES HIS NEW RESPONSIBILITY IN SEPTEMBER.

2. PROFESSOR CURIEN WILL OCCUPY THE KEY SCIENCE POLICY POSITION IN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT. AS DELEGUE GENERAL, HE WILL BE CHARGED WITH COORDINATING GOF PLANNING AND BUDGETING IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. AS AIGRAIN POINTED OUT, HIS REPLACEMENT COMES AT AN OPPORTUNE TIME. IN AUTUMN, PREPARATION OF THE SEVENTH PLAN (1975-1979) COMMENCES. CURIEN WILL THEN TAKE A LEADING PART IN DEVELOPING THE PLAN, WHICH WILL RECOMMEND MAJOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL

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OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. AIGRAIN WAS

INFLUENTIAL IN THE SELECTING OF CURIEN AS HIS REPLACEMENT.

3. THE 49 YEAR OLD CURIEN IS A GRADUATE OF THE ECOLE NORMALE SUPERIEURE AND RECEIVED HIS DOCTORATE IN PHYSICS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS IN 1952. A SPECIALIST IN CRYSTALOGRAPHY AND MINERALOGY HE HAS PUBLISHED OVER SIXTH SCIENTIFIC PAPERS. HE WAS SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR OF THE CNRS FROM 1966 TO 1969 WHEN HE BECAME THE DIRECTOR GENERAL. THROUGHOUT HIS GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE, HE HAS RETAINED HIS PROFESSORSHIP AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS. HE HAS CONSISTENTLY FAVORED BILATERAL INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN SCIENCE. HE IS COMPLETELY AT EASE IN WORKING WITH U.S. COUNTERPARTS AND RESEARCHERS.

4. CURRIEN'S REPLACEMENT AT THE CNRS HAS NOT YET BEEN OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED. HOWEVER INFORMED SOURCES SAY THAT IT WILL PROBABLY BE ROBERT CHABBAL 46 YEARS OLD DIRECTOR OF PHYSICS AT THE CNRS, AND PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS.

5. COMMENT: WHILE IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO TAKE THE PLACE OF THE HIGHLY ENERGETIC AND CAPABLE AIGRAIN, CURIEN, NEVERTHELESS, COMES TO HIS NEW POSITION SUPERBLY EXPERIENCED BOTH IN SCIENCE AND IN GOVERNMENT. HIS APPOINTMENT SHOULD BE WELL RECEIVED BY THE PROPONENTS OF GOVERNEMENT SUPPORT FOR BASIC RESEARCH. THERE HAS BEEN MUCH TALK OF DIRECTING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TOWARD APPLIED RESEARCH AND AWAY FROM BASIC RESEARCH. AIGRAIN WAS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN COUNTERING ANY EXCESSIVE MOVES IN THIS DIRECTION WHILE REINFORCING TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRAMS AND THE SUPPORT OF APPLIED RESEARCH.IRWIN

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